



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Publisher Volume Number
Church mouse 2014

Issue Number
34

Date
March 2014

From Pastor Rodney

See Pastor's report.

E-mail: Pastorrodney@midtel.net

Pastor now has office hours Tuesday through Friday from 9-1. Please call ahead in case he had to leave.

New website

Our new webpage is up and running. Check it out. It is awesome! Thank you Angela. The address is www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com

Looking for new members!

If you would like to become a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church please speak with Pastor Rodney.

Upcoming Youth Events:

Break Out - March 8 - A Christian youth gathering of young people in grades 6 and up from all over the area. Our youth are leaving St. Mark's at **7:00 a.m.** to go to Saratoga Springs to attend this event. Please call Pastor if you would like to go.

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Andrew Lamont
Emma
Virginia Peterson
Jim and Deb's granddaughter Alyssa
Jim Brigadier
Ginny's Dad
Jessica
Michael

Upcoming Events

March 11 - Council meeting 6 PM

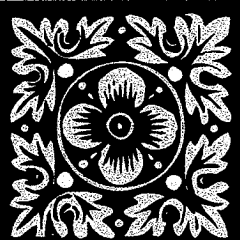
March 15 - Youth meeting 6:30 - 8:30

March 26- NET dinner at St. Mark's at 5:30.

Hall Usage

Many groups have asked to use our facility for their meetings. If you happen to be at the church please double check that all lights have been turned off and both doors are locked.

Also please leave the doors going into the sanctuary open for the winter.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for March

March 2:

Acolyte - Kaleb/Mary
Ushers - Bonnie/Bill
Reader - Mike Harrison
Greeter - Maurice
Prayer - Georgia
Counter - Carrie

March 9:

Acolyte - Gabby/Hannah
Ushers - Cody/Austin
Reader - John Cronin
Greeter - Pat
Prayer - Beth
Counter - Debbie

March 16:

Acolyte - Breanna/Logan
Ushers - Chris/Beth
Reader - Nanette
Greeter - Janet
Prayer - Gene
Counter - Diane

March 23:

Acolyte - Morgan/Brianna
Ushers - Jeremy/Kobe
Reader - Ethel
Greeter - Debbie
Prayer - Ginny
Counter - Carrie

March 30:

Acolyte - Kaleb/Jenna
Ushers - Maurice/Ginny
Reader - Sharon N.
Greeter - Ginny
Prayer - Chris
Counter - Debbie

Choir for Ecumenical Good Friday Service:

An invitation has been extended to all who wish to sing at the ecumenical Good Friday service on April 18th. Rehearsals will be on March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6 and 13 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Reformed Church. Attendance at all of the rehearsals is not mandatory. If you have any questions, please contact Russ Ryan at 827-4093.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: March

March 1 - Carrie Foland
March 3 - Teena Przychodny
March 13 - Jill Hanley
March 14 - Jim Brigadier and Dylan
 Hillicoss and Mary
 Chichester
March 17 - Nicholas Wilsey
March 19 - Cheryl Cater
March 22 - Dean Roney and William
 Cronin
March 27 - Virginia Tinney

Anniversaries: March

March 15 - John and Heather
 Palmatier

Thrivent Challenge

Thrivent is offering a challenge to churches who serve the community through outreach programs. For every dollar donated to our food pantry between December 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014, Thrivent Foundation will grant 50 cents per \$1.00 raised up to a total grant of \$5,000. Please prayerfully consider participating in this challenge by making a monetary donation to our food pantry. So far we have raised \$3,700. Thank you!

Did you know that St. Mark's collects the small empty ink cartridges from your printer, fax machine or copier? The ladies take them when shopping for office supplies and we received a credit for every one that we return. There is a small basket in the narthex to recycle yours.

Lady Knights win the WAC Crossover Tournament

Congratulations to the Girls' Varsity Basketball team for their outstanding, come-from-behind performance against Fort Plain to win the WAC Crossover Tournament with a 51 - 45 win and their first-ever crown as champions. What a great way to end the regular season and forge into Class C Sectional play! Kudos to Coaches Gregg and Amber Johns and the rest of the girls' basketball program

**Congratulations to St. Mark's
young ladies - Taylor Cater,
Breanna Palmatier and Marilyn
Hanley.**

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

In the gospel of Luke 18:9-14 we read, "He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'"

This is a familiar text, one in which we will do well to reflect on especially as we are approaching the season of Lent. It's all too easy for many of us to be filled with self righteousness and judgment much like the Pharisee in scripture. Many times as this story is preached in church we are quick to condemn the Pharisee as we should, because of his lack of humility and love for others.

His approach to prayer and his prayer as a whole was far from what prayer truly is. We are invited to go to God in prayer and humble ourselves so that we can be lifted up and receive God's forgiveness. We cannot be a Christian if we refuse to communicate with God, and examine ourselves. All of us as God's elect are under attack by the devil we cannot defeat him by our own strength, but by the power of the blood of Jesus. I would argue that we have all been guilty of being like the Pharisee at one time or another boasting about all that we do for God and condemning those that don't do as much as we do.

It's easy for us to stand up proudly and say, "I go to church every Sunday," "I give generously to the poor," "I read the Bible everyday and I fast every week." But in the same breath we can call up our friends and condemn all those we think are falling short, so we can feel better about ourselves. We can be in church every Sunday, give generously to the poor, read the Bible and fast but if we do not allow the word of God to bear fruits and the Holy Spirit to transform us then we are still living in sin.

The tax collector did not pretend to be perfect, he was aware that he was a sinful man, and as a result he will not even look up to heaven but beat his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Two men came in to pray but only one prayed and one received forgiveness. The other was present in the temple and thought that he prayed but he did not pray to God but to himself. When we go to church and our mind is not on worship but on something else then we are in danger of being like the Pharisee in the story. When we go to church knowing that we are sinful and need forgiveness then God will forgive us because he is merciful. As we prepare for Lent, let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the Holy Spirit. Let us pray like the tax collector asking God to have mercy, let us ask the Lord like the psalmist to search us and know our hearts and see if there be any wicked way in us and if there is to cleanse us and make us whole. Remember 1 John 7-8 says "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen."

Rev. Ryan Rokey

Creative Women's Ministry – 2013

In 2013 the women of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, with the assistance of Pastor Royan Rodney, embarked in a new ministry. The purpose of this women's group is to share in fellowship, social activities, and outreach to our community. The Women's Ministry group meets on the third or fourth Friday of each month.

During 2013 we participated in the following activities:

- March we celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a corned beef and cabbage dinner and we were entertained by the Irish Step dancers from Sharon Springs.
- In the spring and early summer, we sponsored a raffle of a beautiful quilt made by the Phoebe's Circle. The funds raised by this raffle are used to support our outreach activities.
- In the fall, several ladies visited Marchand Manor Nursing Home in Sharon Springs. They had a wonderful time playing dominoes and other board games with the residents.
- The Christmas visit in December had to be cancelled due to inclement weather; however, the Christmas program was rescheduled and held on January 11. Five ladies visited the residents at Marchand Manor where they distributed gifts, sang songs and played board games. All had a wonderful time and left with a promise to return for a visit in February for Valentine's Day.

It is our hope that our ministry program will continue to expand so we can start visiting other facilities in the spring. All women are welcome to make suggestions and participate in the activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgia VanDyke
Marie Whittaker

St. Mark's Christian Care After-School Program - 2013



This has been a year of transition. From January through June, we held the Christian Care After-School Program in the Middleburgh Elementary School with 28 children in attendance. Then in September we moved back to the church fellowship hall with 19 youth. Since then and for various reasons, several children had to leave us so now we have 16 participating in ASP.

Even though we are on a smaller scale, it is still very rewarding and at times challenging. Our staff this year consists of Patti Bowman, Jessica Miller, Melissa Sniffen, Sharon Nesbitt and Cheryl Cater working full time. Maureen Sniffen has been added to our staff and is a great asset in the homework room, especially with the new "core" math challenge this year. Bonnie Morton, helps volunteer one day a week and Carolyn Wyckoff is always willing to substitute when needed. Thanks goes to a great team and to God for selecting them!

We meet from 3:00 until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our daily schedule includes taking attendance, reading a Bible story which is followed by a prayer given by one of the youths and then snack time. After that, we focus on homework time and play time.

In the fall of 2013 we applied for a grant to create a fenced in playground area behind the church. However, we do not expect to receive a reply for our request until later this year.

You are always welcome to come and share time with the children, do a craft, do a program or just bring a snack.

In Christ,

Cheryl Cater / Carolyn Wyckoff
ASP Coordinators

Worship and Music 2013 Annual Report

What a privilege it is to be able to come together each Sunday to read the Holy Scriptures, lift up prayers and sing songs of praise to God, our Father!

Time passes very swiftly for it's hard to grasp that Pastor Rodney has been leading our worship services since July 2012. During the times he was away this past year, God provided several guest speakers deliver His message to us.

Joint worship services were held with Christ the Shepherd Church on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday as well as at Gobbler's Knob where we enjoyed a picnic following the service. Community worship services with other churches in Middleburgh were held in July on the Middleburgh Central School lawn and on Thanksgiving eve at the Reformed Church.

We have 11 dedicated people who are willing to share their voices in service to the Lord by singing in our choir. In addition to the piano accompaniment, we were blessed to have Cheryl Cater play flute on several musical pieces and handbells were played by Denise Minton, Marie Whittaker, and Carrie Bowman at the Christmas eve service.

There were two handbell concerts held in 2013. One was in March, the other in December when Christmas music was featured. In June, a concert was held at Robinson Terrace's assisted living and nursing home facilities and we hope to return there in 2014.

New acolyte robes were donated to St. Mark's. Praises are to be lifted to God for providing them for us.

The piano in the fellowship hall does not hold tune so this next year, Cheryl and Carolyn will research the possibility of getting a new electronic keyboard. They will bring their recommendation to Council for their approval before any purchase is made.

May God surround you with His Holy presence as you praise and glorify Him!

In His Service,

Carolyn Wyckoff
Cheryl Cater

PHOEBE CIRCLE – 2013 REPORT

Here it is the beginning of 2014 and God is still busy showing the Phoebe's that giving is so rewarding and fulfilling. The more we give, the more God provides in the donations and support we get from everyone. We as a ministry are so blessed in so many ways and joyfully go on to bless others.

Our outreach activities in 2013 include:

- 24 encouragement baskets were made and delivered
- Hats and mittens from our mitten tree were given to our After School Program, Wings as Eagles Ministry, Middleburgh Elementary School, Schoharie Central School, Gilboa-Conesville Central School, Office of the Aging and Catholic Charities
- 48 quilts delivered to City Mission, Wings as Eagles Ministries, victims of floods in Colorado, Albany Medical Center and the VA Hospital
- 12 quilts were given out locally
- 10 doll quilts which was a new outreach for the Phoebe's this year
- 1 queen size quilt was donated to Creative Women's Ministry to be auctioned as a fundraiser
- 1 quilt given as a door prize at our church chicken and biscuit dinner in September (won by David Coons)

The Phoebe's held several fundraisers and we say a thank you to all who supported our efforts. Delicious strawberry jam and (pepper jelly -thank you Ron and Edna) were made and sold during the summer to help defray the cost of supplies for our quilts. Our annual pie sale was again a great success. A paint pail was made to collect donations for the cost of the paint for the sanctuary and it was so successful that the left over funds were given to us toward our next fundraiser which is to buy fabric and cover the pew cushions. We also sold handmade scarves for this purpose.

Table decorations for our chicken parm dinner in August and for the chicken 'n biscuit dinner in September were made and were a great conversation piece.

We also hosted receptions for Lorene Duncan's and Harold Peterson's memorial services.

One of the highlights of our Monday lunch time is our Bible study. This has been a great time of learning and discussion. We are now doing 100 Women of the Bible and this has been very educational. A big "thank you" goes to Carolyn Wyckoff who leads this devotion time.

Our mission is and always has been to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. God is so good all the time and He has richly blessed us in all of our endeavors to bless others.

We would love to have you come visit or join us any Monday. We will definitely find a project for you to do and the fellowship and devotion time is wonderful.

Thank you to all who have prayerfully supported our endeavors to serve the Lord.

God bless you all,

Sharon A. Nesbitt